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THE PROBLEM OF ORIENTAL IMMIGRATION IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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One of the oldest legends of Japan tells of the sun goddess, Amaterasu, how she sulked and shut herself up in a cave till all the world was dark and fear possessed the hearts of men. Myriads of deities, the story goes on to say, did their best to induce the goddess to reappear, but without success. At last came the deity *Thought-Includer*, child of the *High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity*, who hatched a plot. Outside the door of the cave the conspiring gods made so mighty a noise, dancing and singing, that the goddess could not forbear opening the door ajar. Then they flashed in her face a wonderfully polished mirror, showing the goddess to herself, and while Amaterasu admired they closed the cave behind her. So the land again had light. The opening of Japan to intercourse with the outside world through the epoch-making visit of Commodore Perry has certainly in many respects brought Japan face to face with a new epoch in her history and has had results which those who lured forth the sulking goddess could scarcely have anticipated. A nation once out of the box is not easily to be recaptured and re-imprisoned.

The awakening of Japan is the awakening of the whole Orient. The huge bulk of China is responding as certainly, if more slowly, to the influences of western civilization as the more impressionable Island Empire. Already we perceive the feverish starts, the "impatient nerves which quiver while the body slumbers as in a grave."

This awakening at the present time finds few skeptical as to its significance. Professor Percival Lowell indeed, writing, however, before the Russo-Japanese war has endeavored to belittle its interest for ourselves by speaking of the Oriental civilizations as worn-out, decadent, exhausted. He has made himself believe that reaching the Pacific they have found Nirvana. But such an attitude can only remind us of the Japanese story given in a book of Buddhist ser-

mons,—the story of the frog who journeyed from Tokio to see Kyoto and, reaching a mountain top midway, stood on tiptoe to view the western capital. He saw only the city he had left—*for his eyes were in the back of his head*. Recent events have more strongly than ever emphasized the fact that the Orient has by no means as yet satisfied itself with Nirvana. It is becoming more and more evident that, whether we are considering the general question of state policy towards an Oriental country or whether we are considering some local problem, such as that of immigration, which indirectly affects the general international situation, it is necessary to take this into account. The apparently isolated question of immigration is, like Thor's drinking horn, connected quite inevitably with the ocean of international considerations.

The attitudes of men with regard to the facts of Oriental development may quite reasonably vary. Some may, like the eloquent author of "The Torch," be bracing their souls to the contemplation of the distant future, when American civilization shall have played its part in the world's making and we, more or less resignedly, shall have to pour the accumulated treasures of history into the lap of the Eastern world.

Others may look at the whole matter, even from the American standpoint, optimistically, seeing in the meeting of east and west the completion of Hegel's great circle of spiritual development, the day's work of the "Ewigzeitgeist." Others again may view the future fearfully. As Anaxagoras unrolled before the Athenians the map of Anaximander, while he harangued them on the danger of the Persian advance, so these may lift up the cry of the "Yellow Peril" and color with alarmist pigments the counsels of statesmen and the editorial utterances of the press.

Whatever the attitude adopted, the country needs, even for the discussion of local problems, a broad appreciation of facts. On July 12, 1852, Mr. William H. Seward pointed out that two civilizations which had parted company four thousand years ago on the plains of Asia were meeting again on the Pacific. Hence, he added, "the Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands and the vast regions beyond, will become the chief theatre of events in the world's great hereafter."

We need to remember this, especially in the State of Washington, which in some ways is more closely connected with the Orient

than any other part of the country. That is why it has seemed necessary to preface what is here said with regard to Oriental immigration with a certain amount of generalization. The problem of immigration is a small one apart from its connection with the general problem of our national relations with China and Japan and the bearing of these relations upon the still larger question of world politics. As Darwin traced the failure of white clover in Australia to the killing of the cats which left the mice free to eat the bumble bees by means of which the clover was fertilized, so some small local prejudice against a Japanese laborer or storekeeper on the Pacific Coast may set in motion the machinery for a war embroiling the nations of two hemispheres.

With such portentous possibilities it is a real relief to confess that, so far as the State of Washington is concerned, there is no great cause for alarm. Whatever may be the temperature in British Columbia to the north and in California to the south, there is no hot blood, at the moment of writing, in Washington. Indeed, to some the discussion of the subject as a "problem" has seemed academic. A friend, speaking of the excited attempts of a very small group of exclusionists to rouse feeling on the subject, is reminded of poor Hood's pathetic remark, when they put the mustard plaster on his emaciated chest, "Don't you think there is a great deal of mustard to very little meat?" Twenty-five years ago there was considerable feeling as to Chinese immigration, the day of the Japanese was not yet, and riots took place in Seattle and Tacoma which have so far prevented any large Oriental migration to Tacoma. There are now no Chinese in that city and only 664 Japanese.

But there is little trace of the old bitterness. Here and there we have prejudice and dislike. Over-sensitive mothers fear an immoral influence from Orientals in school with their children. Exclusion leagues sporadically put forth their posters, "Fire the Japs," but the proceeding is half-hearted and suggests the need of the exclusionists themselves being "fired"—with enthusiasm, if they are to make their cause a live issue. There can be little question that the general public sentiment of the State of Washington is fairly well expressed in a recent editorial of the "Post-Intelligencer" (Seattle), as follows:

"In an extensively advertised article by Mr. Will Irwin, of San Francisco, 'Pearson's Magazine,' printed in New York; undertakes

to tell 'Why the Pacific Slope hates the Japanese.' The title of Mr. Irwin's article is rather too broad, for to undertake to explain 'why' the Japanese are 'hated,' is to assume hatred of the race as a fact, and that is error of a rather mischievous sort.

"It is obviously illogical to assume that because some Americans on this coast hate some Japanese, or because some Americans hate all Japanese, that, therefore, on this coast all Americans hate all Japanese.

"Mr. Irwin is perfectly competent to speak for that portion of San Francisco which has been under his immediate observation and study; but he is not authorized to speak for Washington, or for the city of Seattle.

"Washington is a part of the Pacific Slope; but so far as the vast majority of the men and women of this state are concerned, there is no hatred of the Japanese, no prejudice against the race, and no unkindly feeling for members of the race who now reside in this commonwealth. On their own account, they are perfectly welcome here.

"But aside from the inherent worth of good Japanese who have settled in this city and state, a vast majority of the people of Washington believe that these citizens of Japan should be accorded every right, privilege and immunity vouchsafed them in the solemn stipulations entered into by the United States government and the government of Japan.

"There may be Japanese problems in California; there is none here. There may be hatred of Japanese in California, but there is none here, and 'Pearson's' should be fairer and juster in its conclusions than to put Washington in a false attitude."

It is worth noticing, moreover, that during the recent visit to the Pacific Coast of the Japanese training squadron, under Vice-Admiral Ijichi, while in Vancouver, B. C., under the flag of Japan's ally, sufficient hostility was shown to prevent a parade of Japanese sailors under arms; in Seattle and Tacoma the welcome was of the warmest, and every appreciation of the sterling qualities of the Mikado's seamen was manifested.

Of course such a condition of feeling may not be permanent. Human nature is much the same in Washington as in California. Some sudden exacerbation of public sentiment might easily lead to hostile expression. But it is sufficiently evident that the hostility,

wherever it may manifest itself, is not primarily *racial*. Dr. Josiah Royce has recently written:¹ "Our so-called race problems are merely the problems caused by our antipathies." Remembering this, we can see three or four reasons for the general absence in the State of Washington of antipathy towards the Orientals:

1. There is the consciousness that the immigration of Orientals is not now, nor is likely to be in the future, on such a scale as seriously to threaten the disturbance of the labor market. The number of Chinese now in the state is uncertain. In 1905 a census was commenced, but was not completed owing to the filing of protests from various quarters. So far as taken, I am informed by the inspector of immigration at this port, Mr. John H. Sargent, there were shown to be 2,936 Chinese in the state. Of this number 2,225 were laborers, 329 merchants, 264 natives of the state and 118 unclassified. Mr. Sargent believes the total number is less than 5,000 at the present time. The distribution, so far as the larger towns are concerned, is as follows: Seattle, 602; Spokane, 268; Walla Walla, 220; Blaine, 221; Anacortes, 218; Port Townsend, 160; Point Roberts, 146; Bellingham, 100. In the last named towns the Chinese are employed chiefly in the salmon canneries during the summer.

With regard to the Japanese, the figures furnished me by the Japanese Consulate are very explicit and show the Japanese population of 134 communities in the state. The total number is 9,056, a much smaller number than is popularly supposed. The distribution, mentioning again only the larger cities and towns, is as follows: Seattle, 3,134; Tacoma, 664; Spokane, 447; Bellingham, 150; Yakima, 149; Olympia, 57; Everett, 17. In some smaller places we have a larger proportion of Japanese, as, for instance, 403 at Fife, 74 at Walville, 75 at Leavenworth, 90 at Kerriston, 132 at Mukilteo, 103 at Littele, 96 at Startup. In these latter communities the presence of Japanese is due to local demands for labor in railway construction, canneries, logging camps, etc. In Seattle the bulk of the Japanese are engaged in mercantile pursuits, restaurants, hotels and in domestic service.

As to the immigration at present proceeding, we have an annual average of 700 Chinese entering the United States through the ports of this district. Of these the large majority are former residents of the United States. The new arrivals during the past year have not

¹"Race Questions and Prejudices," p. 47.

exceeded fifty, and consist of "students, merchants, travelers for curiosity and pleasure, and officials of the Chinese Government."

With regard to the present rate of Japanese immigration I cannot do better than quote Mr. Sargent's words: "During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1908, approximately 4,500 Japanese entered the United States through ports of this state. Japanese immigration for the fiscal year ending June 30th, next (1909), will not exceed one-half of the above number." As Seattle is the principal port of entry for the Japanese who come to this country it will be seen that there is no great danger of our being overrun as things are at present. Passports, since the agreement of June, 1908, between the State Departments, are now issued to three classes of laborers only, viz., "former residents of the United States, parents or children of former residents and settled agriculturists." Not more than twenty-five have this past year been admitted as "settled agriculturists," *i. e.*, as those who own an interest in some farm or farming enterprise in the United States. A considerable proportion of the new arrivals are Japanese women who come to join the husbands to whom they have already been married in Japan by proxy. On their arrival they are now re-married according to the laws of the State of Washington.

2. There is no real fear, as matters stand, of any mischievous influence, morally and socially, through the presence of Orientals in the state. I may again quote from Mr. Sargent's letter to me: "At times in the past when complaints were raised by labor unions, exclusion leagues and others as to the number of Japanese arriving on this coast the department has sent our special officers to investigate. These officers on going aboard our boats found the Japanese to be young men, bright, active, intelligent, cleanly and well-dressed. On going ashore they found that none of them were in poor-houses or supported by charity." The presence of Japanese and Chinese in our schools and universities is not resented; they do good work and graduate with credit. There are now in the schools of Seattle, forty-seven Chinese (thirty-three boys and fourteen girls), and 242 Japanese (215 boys and twenty-seven girls). Nine Chinese and fifty Japanese are in high schools. Mr. F. B. Cooper, superintendent of schools, informs me: "Reports that come to me from the principals are that both the Japanese and Chinese are unobtrusive and studious, and that they occasion little or no difficulty so far as the administra-

tion of the school is concerned." He writes further, "we experience no difficulty whatever with either the Japanese or Chinese on moral grounds. They attend strictly to their own business, those that we have in school being newcomers to the country and knowing little or nothing of our language, keep naturally very much to themselves. The little children are tractable and apt." The state law does not, as in Oregon and California, forbid intermarriage between Japanese and whites and such marriages, while not frequent, are not unsuccessful, nor do they, except under extraordinary circumstances, attract any special attention.

The question of ultimate assimilation is one on which it is difficult to speak with any certainty. The Japanese themselves are to such an extent the result of fusion, combining such elements as Ainu, Mongol, Malay, Negrito, that a strain of white blood is not likely to diminish their vitality, whatever the Japanese strain may do for the Caucasian. It is quite certain as Dr. Gulick has shown in his "Evolution of the Japanese," that the differences between Japanese and Americans are not biological but sociological, due to environment rather than to unalterable physiological laws. At any rate, the Japanese element is too small to have an appreciable effect in altering the American type.

3. There is a very general conviction in Washington that the commercial interests of the Pacific Northwest demand close touch with the Orient and its peoples. With our present lack of a merchant marine, it is wise to encourage the commercial enterprise of the Chinese and Japanese. Their countrymen help to keep up and develop trade. Unfair treatment is apt to produce boycotts which are speedily felt by Pacific Coast merchants. Moreover, the standard of living in the Orient is raised by the example of Orientals who have had experience of life in American cities, and the raising of the standard of living in the Orient is the problem of the foreign merchant. It has been said with truth that to raise the standard of comfort in China by 50 per cent is to add commercially to the world's population 200 millions of human beings.

4. Beyond the merely negative sentiment of the causelessness for alarm and beyond the more or less selfish considerations of the business man there is growing up the sense of responsibility for harmonious international relations. The Oriental nations are no longer regarded as barbarians to be bullied at will. They have the

right, and the power to enforce the right, to be treated as self-respecting and honorable members of the great family of nations. It is felt, therefore, that the Oriental question must be regarded from a higher point of view than that of merely local and selfish interests. Of course, were the strain on our patience and good judgment suddenly intensified there is no telling what might happen, but at present there can be no doubt that our public men and the press are alive to the importance of looking at the Oriental problem from a national and even human point of view.

This much may be said by way of conclusion. In saying that there is little racial antipathy at present in Washington I have said less than the truth. On the positive side much is being done towards the creation of good relations. The Chamber of Commerce in Seattle has taken an active interest in promoting good feeling between the merchants of Japan and those of the state, sending and receiving delegations with accompaniments of the highest courtesy. The University of Washington is making a good beginning in providing for instruction in Oriental literature and languages. The churches, too, are active in the establishment of missions in the larger towns, and flourishing institutions conducted by six or seven religious bodies, exist in Seattle for the benefit of Japanese or Chinese.

Nor is this without result. Commerce is developed with the Orient itself through the presence of Oriental agents here. Education is advanced in Japan and China through the stimulus given by the graduates of American colleges. Moreover, religious work in China and Japan is wonderfully stimulated by the work accomplished amongst Orientals here. Bishop Restarick, of Honolulu has recently said that according to the testimony of Chinese and Japanese missionaries of long experience the converts in Hawaii, and the same is even truer of those on the Pacific Coast, are two or three generations ahead of the converts in the Orient itself. In such a gradual moral and intellectual assimilation of the members of alien races lies our best hope for the future. An iron-bound policy of exclusion can only keep apart, and that against the course of nature and against the interests of both sides of the Pacific. The fable of the clam, which boasted of its security from attack because of its ability to close its shell, and awoke to find itself on a fish-stall with the notice above it, "This clam, two cents," is as applicable to other

countries as to Japan. Frank and honorable relations between the state departments of Oriental nations and our own, equally removed from doctrinaire sentimentalism and from pandering to popular prejudice; intelligent and humane administration of existing laws respecting immigrants; encouragement of the intercourse which shall promote mutual understanding and good will—these are the factors which will make the human more conspicuous than the racial and link together the two sides of the Pacific with the bonds of honorable and lasting peace.